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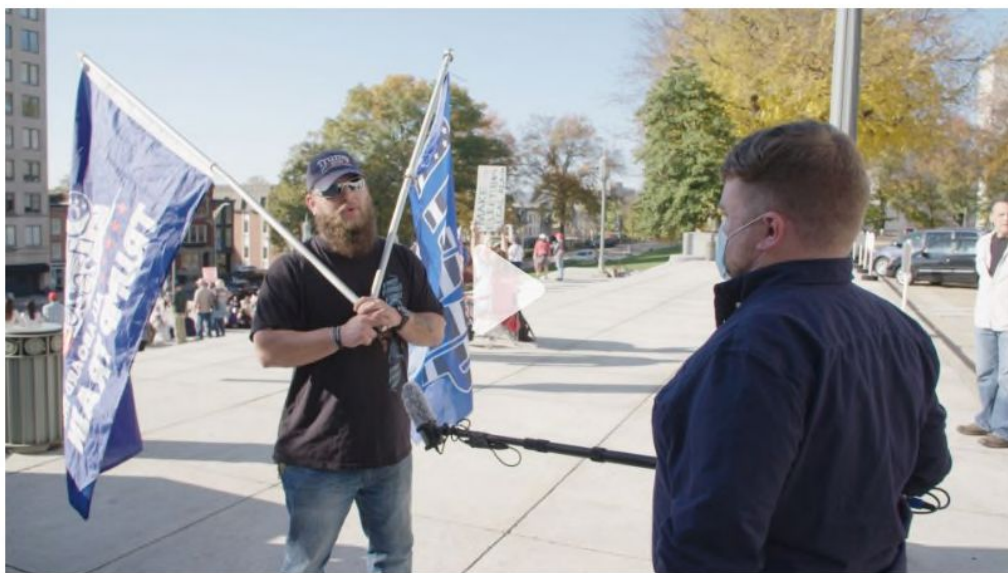
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Sidney Powell is a beacon of hope to sad Qanon supporters



By Donie O'Sullivan, CNN Business

Updated 2:02 PM EST, Tue November 24, 2020



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New York (CNN Business) — A few weeks before the election I went to a meeting of QAnon fanatics in Scottsdale, Arizona.

The groupthink there: President Trump was not only going to win the election — he was going to win it in a landslide. Anything other than that result would be evidence of mass election fraud.

That, of course, didn't happen. And on Monday evening the Trump administration green-lit the

fanatics in Scottsdale, Arizona.

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That, of course, didn't happen. And on Monday evening the Trump administration green-lit the transition to the Biden presidency.

But for some Trump supporters, especially those who believe in QAnon conspiracy theories either knowingly or not, that move is meaningless. For three weeks they've been clinging to the idea that a miracle was coming, that Trump would emerge victorious and liberals would be left in tears. They haven't changed their minds yet.

This is where Sidney Powell has come in. Powell had, working with Trump's legal team, become a key face of the false allegations about election fraud. Trump's legal team distancing itself from her did little to change that in the minds of the QAnon believers who see her as their hero — indeed, for some of them, it has only strengthened their belief that she and Trump together have a plan for his ultimate victory.

Dreams of a Trump landslide

QAnon followers needed Trump to be re-elected: His defeat would be yet more evidence that the narrative spun by the anonymous "Q," a supposed Trump insider, and by the influencers in the movement, bore no connection to reality. Some even acknowledged a little wariness about the fact that Q had been making predictions for three years without the predicted events ever materializing.

QAnon had long promised Trump was going to upend the deep state. One of its first posts in 2017 claimed that Hillary Clinton was about to be arrested.

The 100 or so people who gathered in the conference room of a resort in Scottsdale last month listened as different speakers took the podium. The speakers (mostly men) that day and their ilk make money from QAnon. They run online radio shows, sell QAnon merchandise, and self-publish books. Some just straight-up ask for donations.



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Their message to the audience: Be patient and trust Q. Everything will come true after Trump's re-election.

Then Trump lost. Whoever "Q" is has barely posted since Election Day.

The speakers in Scottsdale can be thought of as priests of QAnon — In fact some of them were citing specific Q posts that day as if they were gospel.



That messiah has gone mostly silent since the election.

Along came Powell

Powell is no stranger to conspiracy theories. She is the lawyer to a QAnon hero – Michael Flynn, President Trump's disgraced former national security adviser.

Her performance at last week's Trump campaign press conference (before the campaign



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Along came Powell

Powell is no stranger to conspiracy theories. She is the lawyer to a QAnon hero – Michael Flynn, President Trump’s disgraced former national security adviser.

Her performance at last week’s [Trump campaign press conference](#) (before the campaign distanced itself from her) was quintessential fodder for QAnon followers.

During it she claimed, with no evidence, a mass Democratic Party conspiracy to cheat in the election coupled with foreign interference by the ghost of Hugo Chavez, and mentions of China and George Soros thrown in for good measure.

Her diatribe was so lacking in evidence it was even [called out by Fox News’ Tucker Carlson](#). For some QAnon followers, however, it was a sermon — a set of talking points and conspiracy theories they could coalesce behind, an opportunity to keep the fantasy alive.



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In the days since, Powell’s baseless claims have been propelled across the internet by QAnon’s adherents. One of the people who spoke at the Arizona conference retweeted Monday a post that called Powell “our attorney doing God’s work to preserve our Republic!”

Big Tech platforms say they have cracked down, even banned, QAnon conspiracy theories – but they can still be found on all the major social media platforms.

While Powell may not have a “Q” plastered across her forehead, she and Flynn have posted messages online that QAnon followers see as signals.

[In July, Flynn posted a video](#) where he takes an oath after which he repeats phrases and slogans that are hallmarks of QAnon. He also repeatedly uses phrases on social media that are popular among QAnon supporters.

Powell denied Flynn’s video was a QAnon dog whistle, [telling CNN in July](#), “General Flynn and I both encourage love of this great country and patriotism. Neither of us know Q but appreciate the support we have received from all in our fight for the Truth and Justice.”

One of Q’s great promises is a metaphorical “storm” that will upend the supposed “deep state” in Washington.

Powell’s Twitter profile picture is a graphic of her and Flynn with lightning striking the U.S. Capitol. She has also retweeted prominent QAnon supporters.

To QAnon followers the message is clear — Powell is on their side.

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